

anean countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa by deforestation. The similar damage that has been done in Eastern Asia is less well known. A recent investigation into conditions in North China by Mr. Frank N. Meyer, of the Bureau of Plant Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture, has incidentally furnished in very striking fashion proof of the ruin that comes from reckless deforestation of mountains, and of the further fact that the damage once done may prove practically irreparable. So important are these investigations that I herewith attach as an appendix to my message certain photographs showing present conditions in China. They show in vivid fashion the appalling desolation, taking the shape of barren mountains and gravel- and sand-covered plains, which immediately follows and depends upon the deforestation of the mountains. Not many centuries ago the country of northern China was one of the most fertile and beautiful spots in the entire world, and was heavily forested. We know this not only from the old Chinese records, but from the accounts given by the traveler, Marco Polo. He, for instance, mentions that in visiting the provinces of Shansi and Shensi he observed many plantations of mulberry trees. Now there is hardly a single mulberry tree in either of these provinces, and the culture of the silk-worm has moved farther south, to the rivers, we may take P'lo's illustration of the complete change in their rivers, we may take Polo's statement that a certain river, the Hun Ho, was so large and deep that merchants scend it from the sea with heavily laden boats; today this river is simply a broad sandy bed, with shallow, rapid currents wandering hither and thither across it, absolutely un-navigable. But we do not have to depend upon written records. The dry spells, and the wells with water far below the former water-mark, bear testimony to the good days of the past and the evil days of the present. Whatever the native vegetation has been allowed to remain, as, for instance, here and there around a sacred temple or imperial burying ground, there are still huge trees and tangled jungle, fragments of the glorious ancient forests. The thick, matted forest growth formerly covered the mountains to their summits. All natural factors favored this dense forest growth, and as long as it was permitted to exist, the plains at the foot of the mountains were among the most fertile on the globe, and the whole country was a garden. Not the slightest effort was made, however to prevent the unchecked cutting of the trees, or to secure reforestation. Doubtless for many centuries the tree-cutting by the inhabitants of the mountains worked but slowly in bringing about the changes that have now come to pass; doubtless for generations the inroads were scarcely noticeable. But there came a time when the forest had shrunk sufficiently to make each year's cutting a serious matter, and from that time on the destruction proceeded with appalling rapidity; for of course each year of destruction rendered the forest less able to recuperate, less able to resist next year's inroad. Mr. Meyer describes the ceaseless progress of the destruction even now, when there is so little left to destroy. Every morning men and boys go out armed with mattocks or axes, scale the steepest mountain sides, and cut down and grub out, root and branch, the small trees and shrubs still to be found. The big trees disappeared centuries ago, so that now one of these is never seen save in the neighborhood of temples, where they are artificially protected; and even here it takes all the watch and care of the tree-loving priests to prevent their destruction. Each family, each community where there is no common care exercised in the interest of all of them to prevent deforestation, finds its profit in the immediate use of the fuel which would otherwise be used by some other family or some other community. In the total absence of regulation of the matter in the interest of the whole people, each small group is inevitably pushed into a policy of destruction which can not afford to take thought for the morrow. This is just one of those matters which it is fatal to leave to unsupervised individual control. The forests can only be protected by the State by the Nation; and the liberty of action of individuals must be conditioned upon what the State or Nation determines to be necessary for the common safety.

The lesson of deforestation in China is a lesson which mankind should have learned many times already from what has occurred in other places. Denudation leaves naked soil; then gullies cut down to the bare rock; and meanwhile the rock-waste buries the bottomlands. When the soil is gone, men must go; and the process does not take long.

This ruthless destruction of the forests in northern China has brought about, or has aided in bringing about, the desolation, just as the destruction of the forests in central Asia aided in bringing ruin to the once rich central Asian cities, just as the destruction of the forests in northern Africa helped towards the ruin of a region that was a fertile granary in Roman days. Short-sighted man, whether barbaric, semi-civilized, or what he mistakenly regards as fully civilized, when he has destroyed the forests, has rendered certain the ultimate destruction of the land itself. In northern China the mountains are now such as are shown by the accompanying photographs, absolutely barren peaks. Not only have the for-

ests been destroyed, but because of their destruction the soil has been washed off the naked rock. The terrible consequence is that it is impossible now to undo the damage that has been done. Many centuries would have to pass before soil would again collect, or could be made to collect, or could be made to collect, in sufficient quantity once more to support the old-time forest growth. In consequence the Mongol Desert is practically extending eastward over northern China. The climate has changed and is still changing. It has changed even within the last half century, as the work of tree destruction has been consummated. The great masses of arboreal vegetation on the mountains formerly absorbed the heat of the sun and sent up currents of cool air which brought the moisture-laden clouds lower and forced them to precipitate in rain a part of their burden of water. Now that there is no vegetation, the barren mountains, scorched by the sun, send up currents of heated air which drive away, instead of attracting the rain clouds, and cause their moisture to be dissipated. In consequence, instead of the regular and plentiful rains which existed in these regions of China when the forests were still in evidence, the unfortunate inhabitants of the regular and plentiful rains crops wither for lack of rainfall, while the seasons grow more and more irregular; and as the air becomes dryer certain crops refuse longer to grow at all. That every thing dries out faster than formerly is shown by the fact that the level of the wells all over the land has sunk perceptibly, many of them having become totally dry. In addition to the resulting agricultural distress, the watercourses have changed. Formerly they were narrow and deep, with an abundance of clear water the year around; for the roots and humus of the forests caught the rainwater and let it escape by slow, regular seepage. They have now become broad, shallow stream beds, in which muddy water trickles slender currents during the dry seasons, while when it rains there are freshets, and roaring muddy torrents come tearing down, bringing disaster and destruction everywhere. Moreover, these floods and freshets, which diversify the general dryness, wash away from the mountain sides, and either wash away or cover in the valleys, the rich fertile soil which it took tens of thousands of years for Nature to form; and it is lost forever, and until the forests grow again it can not be replaced. The sand and stones from the mountain sides are washed loose and come rolling down to cover the arable lands, and in consequence, throughout this part of China, many formerly rich districts are now sandy wastes, useless for human cultivation and even for pasture. The cities have been of course seriously affected, for the streams have gradually ceased to be navigable. There is testimony that even within the memory of men now living there has been a serious diminution of the rainfall of northeastern China. The level of the Sungari River in northern Manchuria has been sensibly lowered during the last fifty years, at least partly as the result of the indiscriminate cutting of the forests forming its watershed. Almost all the rivers of northern China have become uncontrollable, and very dangerous to the dwellers along their banks, as a direct result of the destruction of the forests. The journey from Peking to Jehol shows in melancholy fashion how the soil has been washed away from the whole valleys, so that they have been converted into deserts.

In northern China this disastrous process has gone on so long and has proceeded so far that no complete remedy could be applied. There are certain mountains in China from which the soil is gone so utterly that only the slow action of the ages could again restore it; although of course much could be done to prevent the still further eastward extension of the Mongolian Desert if the Chinese Government would act at once. The accompanying cuts from photographs show the inconceivable desolation of the barren mountains in which certain of these rivers rise—mountains, be it remembered, which formerly supported dense forests of larches and firs, now unable to produce any wood, and because of their condition a source of danger to the whole country. The photographs also show the same rivers after they have passed through the mountains, the beds having become broad and sandy because of the deforestation of the mountains. One of the photographs shows a caravan passing through a valley. Formerly, when the mountains were forested, it was thickly peopled by prosperous peasants. Now the floods have carried destruction all over the land and the valley is a stony desert. Another photograph shows a mountain road covered with the stones and rocks that are brought down in the rainy season from the mountains which have already been deforested by human hands. Another shows a pebbly river-bed in southern Manchuria where what was once a great stream has dried up owing to the deforestation in the mountains. Only some scrub wood is left, which will disappear within half a century. Yet another shows the effect of one of the washouts, destroying an arable mountain side, these washouts being due to the removal of all vegetation; yet in this photograph the foreground shows that reforestation is still a possibility in places.

What has thus happened in northern China, what has happened in Central Asia, in Palestine, in North Africa, in parts of the Mediterranean countries of Europe, will surely happen in our country if we do not exercise that wise forethought which should be one of the chief marks of any people calling itself civilized.

Nothing should be permitted to stand in the way of the preservation of the forests, and it is criminal to permit individuals to purchase a little gain for themselves through the destruction of forests when this destruction is fatal to the wellbeing of the whole country in the future.

INLAND WATERWAYS.

Action should be begun forthwith, during the present session of the Congress, for the improvement of our inland waterways—actions which will result in giving us not only navigable but navigated rivers. We have spent hundreds of millions of dollars upon these waterways, yet the traffic on nearly all of them is steadily declining. This condition is the direct result of the absence of any comprehensive and far-seeing plan of waterway improvement. Obviously we can not continue thus to expend the revenues of the Government without return. It is poor business to spend money for inland navigation unless we get it.

Inquiry into the condition of the Mississippi and its principal tributaries reveals very many instances of the utter waste caused by the methods which have hitherto obtained for the so-called "improvement" of navigation. A striking instance is supplied by the "improvement" of the Ohio, begun in 1824, was continued under a single plan for half a century. In 1875 a new plan was adopted and followed for a quarter of a century. In 1902 still a different plan was adopted and has since been pursued at a rate which only promises a navigable river in from twenty to one hundred years longer.

Such shortsighted, vacillating, and futile methods are accompanied by decreasing water-borne commerce and increasing traffic congestion on land, by increasing floods, and by the waste of public money. The remedy lies in abandoning the methods which have so signally failed and adopting new ones in keeping with the needs and demands of our people.

In a report on a measure introduced at the first session of the present Congress, the Secretary of War said: "The chief defect in the methods hitherto pursued lies in the absence of executive authority for originating comprehensive plans covering the country or natural divisions thereof." In this opinion I heartily concur. The present methods not only fail to give us inland navigation, but they are injurious to the army as well. What is virtually a permanent detail of the corps of engineers to civilian duty necessarily impairs the efficiency of our military establishment. The military engineers have undoubtedly done efficient work in actual construction, but they are necessarily unsuited by their training and traditions to take the broad view, and to gather and transmit to the Congress the commercial and industrial information and forecasts, upon which waterway improvement must always so largely rest. Furthermore, they have failed to grasp the great underlying fact that every stream is a unit from its source to its mouth, and that all its uses are interdependent. Prominent officers of the Engineer Corps have recently ever gone so far as to assert in print that waterways are not dependent upon the conservation of the forests about their headwaters. This position is opposed to all the recent work of the scientific bureaus of the Government and to the general experience of mankind. A physician who disbelieved in vaccination would not be the right man to handle an epidemic of smallpox, nor should we have a doctor skeptical about the transmission of yellow fever by the Stegomyia mosquito in charge of sanitation at Havana or Panama. So with the improvement of our rivers; it is no longer wise or safe to leave this great work in the hands of men who fail to grasp the essential relations between navigation and general development and to assimilate and use the central facts about our streams.

Until the work of river improvement is undertaken in a modern way it can not have results that will meet the needs of this modern nation. These needs should be met without further dilly-dallying or delay. The plan which promises the best and quickest results is that of a permanent commission authorized to coordinate the work of all the Government departments relating to waterways, and to frame and supervise the execution of a comprehensive plan. Under such a commission the actual work of construction might be entrusted to the reclamation service; or to the military engineers acting with a sufficient number of civilians to continue the work in time of war; or it might be divided between the reclamation service and the corps of engineers. Funds should be provided from current revenues if it is deemed wise—otherwise from the sale of bonds. The essential thing is that the work should go forward under the best possible plan, and with the least possible delay. We should have a new type of work and a new organization for planning and directing it. The time for playing with our waterways is past. The country demands results.

I urge that all our National parks adjacent to National forests be placed completely under the control of the forest service of the Agricultural Department, instead of leaving them as they now are under the Interior Department and policed by the army. The Congress should provide for superintendents with adequate corps of first-class civilian scouts, or rangers, and further, place the road construction under the superintendent instead of leaving it with the War Department. Such a change in park management would result in economy and avoid the difficulties of administration

tion which now arise from having the responsibility of care and protection divided between different departments. The need for this course is peculiarly great in the Yellowstone Park. This, like Yosemite, is a great wonderland, and should be kept as a national playground. In both all wild things should be protected, and the scenery kept wholly unmarred.

I am happy to say that I have been able to set aside in various parts of the country small, well-chosen tracts of ground to serve as sanctuaries and nurseries for wild creatures.

DENATURED ALCOHOL.

I had occasion in my message of May 4, 1906, to urge the passage of some law putting alcohol, used in the arts, industries, and manufactures, upon the free list; that is, to provide for the withdrawal free of tax of alcohol which is to be denatured for those purposes. The law of June 7, 1906, and its amendment of March 2, 1907, accomplished what was desired in that respect, and the use of denatured alcohol, as intended, is making a fair degree of progress and is entitled to further encouragement and support from the Congress.

PURE FOOD.

The pure food legislation has already worked a benefit difficult to overestimate.

It has been my purpose from the beginning of my administration to take the Indian Service completely out of the atmosphere of political activity, and there has been steady progress toward that end. The last remaining stronghold of politics in that service was the agency system, which had seen its best days, and was gradually falling to pieces from natural or purely evolutionary causes, but like all such survivals, was decaying slowly in its later stages. It seems clear that its extinction had better be made final now, so that the ground can be cleared for larger constructive work on behalf of the Indians, preparatory to their induction into the full measure of responsible citizenship.

On November 1 only eighteen agencies were left on the roster, with two exceptions, where some legal questions seemed to stand temporarily in the way. These have been changed to superintendencies, and their heads brought into the classified civil service.

SECRET SERVICE.

Last year an amendment was incorporated in the measure providing for the Secret Service, which provided that there should be no detail from the Secret Service and no transfer therefrom. It is not too much to say that this amendment has been of benefit only, and could be of benefit only, to the criminal classes. If deliberately introduced for the purpose of diminishing the effectiveness of war against crime it could not have been better devised to this end. It forbade the practices that had been followed to a greater or less extent by the executive heads of various departments for twenty years. To these practices we owe the securing of the evidence which enabled us to drive great lotteries out of business and secure a quarter of a million of dollars in fines from their promoters. These practices have enabled us to discover some of the most outrageous frauds in connection with the theft of government land and government timber by great corporations and by individuals. These practices have enabled us to get some of the evidence indispensable in order to secure the conviction of the wealthiest and most formidable criminals with whom the Government has to deal, both those operating in violation of the anti-trust law and others. The amendment in question was of benefit to no one excepting to these criminals, and it seriously hampers the Government in the detection of crime and the securing of justice. Moreover, it not only affects departments outside of the Treasury but it tends to hamper the Secretary of the Treasury himself in the effort to utilize the employees of his department so as to best meet the requirements of the public service. It forbids him from preventing frauds upon the customs service, from investigating irregularities in branch mints and assay offices, and has seriously crippled him. It prevents the promotion of employees in the Secret Service, and this further discourages good effort. In its present form the restriction operates only to the advantage of the criminal, of the wrongdoer. The chief argument in favor of the provision was that the Congressmen did not themselves wish to be investigated by Secret Service men. Very little of such investigation has been done in the past; but it is true that the work of the Secret Service agents was partly responsible for the indictment and conviction of a Senator and a Congressman for land frauds in Oregon. I do not believe that it is in the public interest to protect criminals in any branch of the public service, and exactly as we have again and again during the past seven years prosecuted and convicted such criminals who were in the executive branch of the Government, so in my belief we should be given ample means to prosecute them if found in the legislative branch. But if this is not considered desirable a special exception could be made in the law prohibiting the use of the Secret Service force in investigating members of the Congress. It would be far better to do this than to do what actually was done, and strive to prevent or at least to hamper effective action against criminals by the executive branch of the Government.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

I again renew my recommendation for postal savings banks for depositing savings with the security of the Government behind them. The object is to encourage thrift and economy in the wage-earner and person of moderate means. In fourteen States the deposits in savings banks as reported to the Comptroller of the Currency amount to \$3,590,245,402, or 98.4 per cent of the entire deposits, while in the remaining 32 States there are only \$70,308,543, or 1.6 per cent, showing conclusively that there are many localities in the United States where sufficient opportunity is not given to the people to deposit their savings. The result is that money is kept in hiding and unemployed. It is believed that in the aggregate vast sums of money would be brought into circulation through the instrumentalities of the postal savings banks. While there are only 1,453 savings banks reporting to the Comptroller there are more than 61,000 post-offices, 40,000 of which are money order offices. Postal savings banks are now in operation in practically all the great civilized countries with the exception of the United States.

PARCEL POST.

In my last annual message I commended the Postmaster-General's recommendation for an extension of the parcel post on the rural routes. The establishment of a local parcel post on rural routes would be to the mutual benefit of the farmer and the country storekeeper, and it is desirable that the routes, serving more than 15,000,000 people, should be utilized to the fullest practicable extent. An amendment was proposed in the Senate at the last session, at the suggestion of the Postmaster-General, providing that, for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of establishing a special local parcel post system on the rural routes throughout the United States, the Postmaster-General be authorized and directed to experiment and report to the Congress the result of such experiment by establishing a special local parcel post system on rural delivery routes in not to exceed four counties in the United States for packages of fourth-class matter originating on a rural route or at the distributing post office for delivery by rural carriers. It would seem only proper that such an experiment should be tried in order to demonstrate the practicability of the proposition, especially as the Postmaster-General estimates that the revenue derived from the operation of such a system on all the rural routes would amount to many million dollars.

EDUCATION.

The share that the National Government should take in the broad work of education has not received the attention and the care it rightly deserves. The immediate responsibility for the support and improvement of our educational systems and institutions rests and should always rest with the people of the several States acting through their state and local governments, but the Nation has an opportunity in educational work which must not be lost and a duty which should no longer be neglected.

The National Bureau of Education was established more than forty years ago. Its purpose is to collect and diffuse such information "as shall aid the people of the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems and otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country." This purpose in no way conflicts with the educational work of the States, but may be made of great advantage to the States by giving them the fullest, most accurate, and hence the most helpful information and suggestion regarding the best educational systems. The Nation, through its broader field of activities, its wider opportunity for obtaining information from all the States and from foreign countries, is able to do that which not even the richest States can do, and with the distinct additional advantage that the information thus obtained is used for the immediate benefit of all our people.

With the limited means hitherto provided, the Bureau of Education has rendered efficient service, but the Congress has neglected to adequately supply the bureau with means to meet the educational growth of the country. The appropriations for the general work of the bureau, outside education in Alaska, for the year 1909 are but \$87,500—an amount less than they were ten years ago, and some of the important items in these appropriations are less than they were thirty years ago. It is an inexcusable waste of public money to appropriate an amount which is so inadequate as to make it impossible properly to do the work authorized, and then by intervening between Oregon and Washington. During these twenty-five years the fishermen of each State have naturally tried to take all they could get, and the two legislatures have never been able to agree on joint action of any kind adequate in degree for the protection of the fisheries. At the moment the fishing on the Oregon side is practically closed, while there is no limit on the Washington side of any kind, and no one can tell what the courts will decide as to the very statutes under which this action and nonaction result. Meanwhile very few salmon reach the spawning grounds, and probably four years hence the fisheries will amount to nothing; and this comes from a struggle between the associated, or gill-net, fishermen on the one hand, and the owners of the fishing wheels up the river. The fisheries of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Potomac are also in a bad way. For this there is no remedy except

visors and enumerators should not be appointed under the civil service law, for the reasons given by the Director. I commend to the Congress the careful consideration of the admirable report of the Director of the Census, and I trust that his recommendations will be adopted and immediate action thereon taken.

REDISTRIBUTION OF BUREAUS.

It is highly advisable that there should be intelligent action on the part of the Nation on the question of preserving the health of the country. Through the practical extermination in San Francisco of disease-bearing rodents our country has thus far escaped the bubonic plague. This is but one of the many achievements of American health officers; and it shows what can be accomplished with a better organization than at present exists. The dangers to public health from food adulteration and from many other sources, such as the menace to the physical, mental and moral development of children from child labor, should be met and overcome. There are numerous diseases, which are now known to be preventable, which are, nevertheless, not prevented. The recent International Congress on Tuberculosis has made us painfully aware of the inadequacy of American public health legislation. This Nation can not afford to lag behind in the world-wide battle now being waged by all civilized people with the microscopic foes of mankind, nor ought we longer to ignore the fact that this Government takes more pains to protect the lives of hogs and of cattle than of human beings. The first legislative step to be taken is that for the concentration of the proper bureaus into one of the existing departments. I therefore urgently recommend the passage of a bill which shall authorize a redistribution of the bureaus which shall best accomplish this end.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

I recommend that legislation be enacted placing under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce and Labor the Government Printing Office. At present this office is under the combined control, supervision, and administrative direction of the President and of the Joint Committee on Printing of the two Houses of the Congress. The advantage of having the 4,069 employees in this office and the expenditure of the \$5,761,377.57 appropriated therefor supervised by an executive department is obvious, instead of the present combined supervision.

SOLDIERS' HOMES.

All Soldiers' Homes should be placed under the complete jurisdiction and control of the War Department.

INDEPENDENT BUREAUS AND COMMISSIONS.

Economy and sound business policy require that all existing independent bureaus and commissions should be placed under the jurisdiction of appropriate executive departments. It is unwise from every standpoint, and results only in mischief, to have any executive work done save by the purely executive bodies, under the control of the President; and each such executive body should be under the immediate supervision of a Cabinet Minister.

STATEHOOD.

I advocate the immediate admission of New Mexico and Arizona as States. This should be done at the present session of the Congress. The people of the two Territories have made it evident by their votes that they will not come in as one State. The only alternative is to admit them as two, and I trust that this will be done without delay.

INTERSTATE FISHERIES.

I call the attention of the Congress to the importance of the problem of the fisheries in the interstate waters. On the Great Lakes we are now, under the very wise treaty of April 11th of this year, endeavoring to come to an international agreement for the preservation and satisfactory use of the fisheries of these waters which can not otherwise be achieved. Lake Erie, for example, has the richest fresh water fisheries in the world; still it is now controlled by the statutes of two Nations, four States, and one Province, and in this Province by different ordinances in different counties. All these political divisions work at cross purposes, and in no case can they achieve protection to the fisheries, on the one hand, and justice to the localities and individuals on the other. The case is similar in Puget Sound.

But the problem is quite as pressing in the interstate waters of the United States. The salmon fisheries of the Columbia River are now but a fraction of what they were twenty-five years ago, and what they would be now if the United States Government had taken complete charge of them by intervening between Oregon and Washington. During these twenty-five years the fishermen of each State have naturally tried to take all they could get, and the two legislatures have never been able to agree on joint action of any kind adequate in degree for the protection of the fisheries. At the moment the fishing on the Oregon side is practically closed, while there is no limit on the Washington side of any kind, and no one can tell what the courts will decide as to the very statutes under which this action and nonaction result. Meanwhile very few salmon reach the spawning grounds, and probably four years hence the fisheries will amount to nothing; and this comes from a struggle between the associated, or gill-net, fishermen on the one hand, and the owners of the fishing wheels up the river. The fisheries of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Potomac are also in a bad way. For this there is no remedy except

for the United States to control and legislate for the interstate fisheries as part of the business of interstate commerce. In this case the machinery for scientific investigation and for control already exists in the United States Bureau of Fisheries. In this as in similar problems the obvious and simple rule should be followed of having those matters which no particular State can manage taken in hand by the United States; problems, which in the absence of conflicting State legislatures are absolutely unsolvable, are easy enough for the Congress to control.

FISHERIES AND FUR SEALS.

The federal statute regulating interstate traffic in game should be extended to include fish. New federal fish hatcheries should be established. The administration of the Alaskan fur-seal service should be vested in the Bureau of Fisheries.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

This Nation's foreign policy is based on the theory that right must be done between nations precisely as between individuals, and in our actions for the last ten years we have in this matter proven our faith by our deeds. We have behaved, and are behaving, towards other nations, as in private life an honorable man would behave towards his fellows.

LATIN-AMERICAN REPUBLICS.

The commercial and material progress of the twenty Latin-American Republics is worthy of the careful attention of the Congress. No other section of the world has shown a greater proportionate development of its foreign trade during the last ten years and none other has more special claims on the interest of the United States. It offers today probably larger opportunities for the legitimate expansion of our commerce than any other group of countries. These countries will want our products in greatly increased quantities, and we shall correspondingly need theirs. The International Bureau is doing a useful work in making these nations and their resources better known to us, and in acquainting them not only with us as a people and with our purposes towards them, but with what we have to exchange for their goods. It is an international institution supported by all the governments of the two Americas.

PANAMA CANAL.

The work on the Panama Canal is being done with a speed, efficiency and entire devotion to duty, which make it a model for all work of the kind. No task of such magnitude has ever before been undertaken by any nation; and no task of the kind has ever been better performed. The men on the isthmus, from Colonel Goethals and his fellow commissioners through the entire list of employees who are faithfully doing their duty, have won their right to the ungrudging respect and gratitude of the American people.

OCEAN MAIL LINES.

I again recommend the extension of the ocean mail act of 1891 so that satisfactory American ocean mail lines to South America, Asia, the Philippines, and Australasia may be established. The creation of such steamship lines should be the natural corollary of the voyage of the battle fleet. It should precede the opening of the Panama Canal. Even under favorable conditions several years must elapse before such lines can be put into operation. Accordingly I urge that the Congress act promptly where foresight already knows that action sooner or later will be inevitable.

THE PHILIPPINES.

Real progress toward self-government is being made in the Philippine Islands. The gathering of a Philippine legislative body and Philippine assembly marks a process absolutely new in Asia, not only as regards Asiatic colonies of European powers, but as regards Asiatic possessions of other Asiatic powers; and, indeed, all ways excepting the striking and wonderful example afforded by the great Empire of Japan. It opens an entirely new departure when compared with anything which has happened among Asiatic powers which are their own masters. Hitherto this Philippine legislature has acted with moderation and self-restraint, and has seemed in practical fashion to realize the eternal truth that there must always be government, and that the only way in which any body of individuals can escape the necessity of being governed by outsiders is to show that they are able to restrain themselves, to keep down wrongdoing and disorder. The Filipino people, through their officials, are therefore making real steps in the direction of self-government. I hope and believe that these steps mark the beginning of a course which will continue till the Filipinos become fit to decide for themselves whether they desire to be an independent nation. But it is well for them (and well also for those Americans who during the past decade have done so much to bring the Philippines by adoption for an immediate independence for which they were totally unprepared) that self-government depends, and must depend, upon the Filipinos themselves. All we can do is to give them the opportunity to develop the capacity for self-government. If we had followed the advice of the foolish doctrinaires who wished us at any time during the last ten years to turn the Filipino people adrift, we should have shirked the plainest possible duty and have inflicted a lasting wrong upon the Filipino people. We have acted in exactly the opposite spirit. We have given the Filipinos constitutional government; a government based upon justice; and we have shown that we have governed them for their good and not for our aggrandizement.